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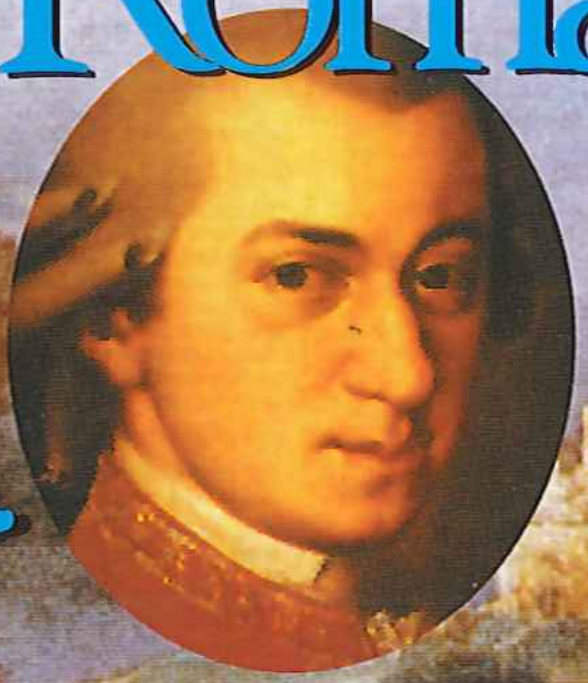
The Romantic Mozart



A CELEBRATION OF MOZART'S MOST ROMANTIC MUSIC

The Romantic Mozart
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

The youngest child and only surviving son of Leopold Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus was born in Salzburg in 1756, the year of publication of his father's influential treatise on violin-playing. He showed early precocity both as a keyboard-player and violinist, and soon turned his hand to composition. His obvious gifts were developed under his father's tutelage, with those of his elder sister, and the family, through the indulgence of their then patron, the Archbishop of Salzburg, was able to travel abroad, specifically, between 1763 and 1766, to Paris and to London. A series of other journeys followed, with important operatic commissions in Italy between 1771 and 1773. The following period proved disappointing to both father and son, as the young Mozart grew to manhood, irked by the lack of opportunity and lack of appreciation of his gifts in Salzburg, where a new Archbishop proved less sympathetic. A visit to Munich, Mannheim and Paris in 1777 and 1778 brought no substantial offer of other employment and by early 1779 Mozart was reinstated in Salzburg, now as court organist. Early in 1781 he had a commissioned opera, Idomeneo, staged in Munich for the Elector of Bavaria and dissatisfaction after being summoned to attend his patron the Archbishop in Vienna led to his dismissal. Mozart spent the last ten years of his life in precarious independence in Vienna, his material situation not improved by a marriage imprudent for one in his circumstances. Initial success with German and then Italian opera and series of subscription concerts were followed by financial difficulties. In 1791 things seemed to have taken a turn for the better, in spite of the lack of interest of the successor to the Emperor Joseph II, who had died in 1790. In late November, however, Mozart became seriously ill and died in the small hours of 5th December. Mozart's compositions were catalogued in the nineteenth century by Köchel, and they are generally now distinguished by K. numbering from this catalogue.

Orchestral Music

(a) Cassations, Divertimenti and Serenades

The best known Serenade of all is Eine kleine Nachtmusik (A Little Night-Music), a charming piece of which four of the five original movements survive. It is scored

for solo strings and was written in the summer of 1787, the year of the opera Don Giovanni and of the death of the composer's father. The Serenata notturna, written in 1776 in Salzburg uses solo and orchestral strings and timpani, while the Divertimento K. 247, the Lodron Night-Music, dating from the same year, also served a social purpose during evening entertainments in Salzburg. Cassations, the word more or less synonymous with Divertimento or Serenade, again had occasional use, sometimes as a street serenade, as in the case of Mozart's three surviving works of this title, designed to mark end of year university celebrations. Generally music of this kind consisted of several short movements. Other examples of the form by Mozart include the so-called Posthorn Serenade, K. 320, which uses the posthorn itself during its course and the Haffner Serenade, designed to celebrate an event in the Haffner family in Salzburg. The Serenade K. 361, known as the Gran Partita, was written during the comnposer's first years of independence in Vienna and scored for a dozen wind instruments and a double bass.

Recommended Recordings

Cassations K. 63, 99 & 100
Naxos 8.550609

Divertimenti K. 131 & 287
Naxos 8.550996

Divertimenti K. 136, 137, 138 (Salzburg Symphonies) and K. 205
Naxos 8.550108

Eine kleine Nachtmusik / Serenata Notturna / Lodron Night-Music No. 1 K. 247
Naxos 8.550026

Serenades K. 185 & 203
Naxos 8.550413

Serenade K. 250 "Haffner"
Naxos 8.550333

Serenade K. 320 "Posthorn" / Notturno
Naxos 8.550092

Serenade K. 361 "Gran Partita"
Naxos 8.550060

(b) Dance Music

Mozart wrote a great deal of dance music both in Salzburg and in Vienna. His only court appointment under the Emperor Joseph II was as a composer of court dance music, a position that, in his words, paid him too much for what he did and not enough for what he could have done. The dance music includes German dances, Ländler, and Contredanses, popular forms of the time.

Recommended Recording

German Dances K. 586, 600, 605
Naxos 8.550412

(c) Concertos

Mozart wrote some 30 keyboard concertos. The earliest of these are four arrangements of movements by various composer, made in 1767, in the form of keyboard concertos. In 1772 Mozart arranged three sonatas by the youngest son of J.S. Bach, Johann Christian, to form keyboard concertos. These last three concertos are not generally included in the numbering of the concertos. Apart from these arrangements Mozart wrote six keyboard concertos during his years in Salzburg. The more important compositions in this form, designed clearly for the fortepiano, an instrument smaller than the modern pianoforte and with a more delicately incisive tone, were written in Vienna between 1782 and 1791, principally for the composer's use in subscription concerts with which he at first won success in the imperial capital. Of the 27 numbered concertos particular mention may be made of the Concertos in C minor and D minor, Nos. 24 and 20, K. 491 and 466. Mozart completed his last piano concerto No. 27, K. 595 in B flat major, in January 1791.

Mozart wrote a series of five concertos for solo violin one in 1773 and four in 1775 at a time when he was concertmaster of the court orchestra in Salzburg. Of these the last three, K. 216 in G major, K. 218 in D major and K. 219 in A major are the best known, together with the splendid Sinfonia concertante of 1779, for solo violin and solo viola. The Concertone for two solo violins, written in 1774, is less frequently heard.

Mozart's concertos for solo wind instruments include a concerto for bassoon, two concertos for solo flute and a concerto for solo oboe, with a final concerto for clarinet written in October 1791. Mozart wrote four concertos for French horn, principally

for the use of his friend, the horn-player Ignaz Leutgeb and a Sinfonia concertante for solo wind instruments, designed for performance by Mannheim friends in Paris. During his stay in France in 1778 he also wrote a fine concerto for flute and harp, intended for unappreciative aristocratic patrons there.

Recommended Recordings

Piano Concertos Nos. 1-4
Naxos 8.550212

Piano Concertos Nos. 5 & 26 / Rondo
Naxos 8.550209

Piano Concertos Nos. 6, 8 & 19
Naxos 8.550208

Piano Concertos Nos. 7, 10 & 15
Naxos 8.550210

Piano Concertos Nos. 9 & 27
Naxos 8.550203

Piano Concertos Nos. 11 & 22
Naxos 8.550206

Piano Concertos Nos. 12, 14 & 21
Naxos 8.550202

Piano Concertos Nos. 13 & 20
Naxos 8.550201

Piano Concertos Nos. 16 & 25 / Concert Rondo
Naxos 8.550207

Piano Concertos Nos. 17 & 18
Naxos 8.550205

Piano Concertos Nos. 20 & 21
Naxos 8.550434

Piano Concertos Nos. 23 & 24
Naxos 8.550204

Violin Concertos Nos. 1 & 2 / Rondo / Andante
Naxos 8.550414

Violin Concertos Nos. 3 & 5 / Rondo / Adagio
Naxos 8.550418

Violin Concerto No. 4
Sinfonia concertante K. 364
Naxos 8.550332

Flute Concertos Nos. 1 & 2 / Andante K. 315
Naxos 8.550074

Flute & Harp Concerto K. 299 / Sinfonia concertante K. 297b
Naxos 8.550159

Oboe Concerto / Bassoon Concerto / Clarinet Concerto
Naxos 8.550345

Chamber Music

It was inevitable that Mozart should also show his mastery in music for smaller groups of instruments. With some reluctance he accepted a commission in Mannheim for a series of quartets for flute and string trio, two of which he completed during his stay there in 1777/8. A third flute quartet was completed in Vienna in 1787, preceded by an oboe quartet in Munich in 1781, a quintet the following year for French horn, violin, two violas and cello and finally, in 1789, a clarinet quintet, the wind part for his friend Anton Stadler, a virtuoso performer on the newly developed clarinet and on the basset-clarinet, an instrument of extended range of his own invention.

Mozart's work for string instruments includes a group of string quintets, written in Vienna in 1787 and, over the course of around twenty years, some 23 string quartets. Particularly interesting are the later quartets, a group of six dedicated to and influenced by Joseph Haydn and three final quartets, the so-called Prussian Quartets, intended for the cello-playing King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm II. To the body of music of more serious intention may be added Ein musikalische Spass, K. 522 (A Musical Joke) for two horns and solo strings, written in 1787. The music is a re-creation of a work played for and presumably composed by village musicians, including formal solecisms and other deliberate mistakes of structure and harmony.

There are other chamber music compositions, principally written during the last ten years of Mozart's life in Vienna, involving the use of the piano, an instrument on

which Mozart excelled. These later compositions include six completed piano trios, two piano quartets, and a work that Mozart claimed to consider his best, a quintet for piano, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and French horn, K. 452.

Mozart added considerably to the violin and piano sonata repertoire, writing his first sonatas for these instruments between the ages of six and eight and his last in 1788, making up a total of some thirty compositions. On the whole the later sonatas intended for professional players of a high order have more to offer than the sonatas written for pupils or amateurs, although there is fine music, for example, in the set of six sonatas written during the composer's journey to Mannheim and Paris in 1777 and 1778.

Recommended Recordings

Clarinet Trio "Kegelstatt" / Clarinet Quartets K. 317d & K. 496
Naxos 8.550439

Flute Quartets (Complete)
Naxos 8.550438

Oboe Quartet K. 370 / Horn Quintet K. 407 / Musical Joke K. 522
Naxos 8.550437

String Quartets K. 464 & K. 428
Naxos 8.550540

String Quartets, K. 80, K. 115, K. 157 & K. 387
Naxos 8.550541

String Quartets K. 458, K. 158, K. 159 & K. 156
Naxos 8.550542

String Quartets K. 136, K. 137, K. 138 & K. 465
Naxos 8.550543

String Quartets K. 160, K. 168, K. 169 & K. 589
Naxos 8.550544

String Quartets K. 170, K. 171 & K. 421
Naxos 8.550546

String Quartets K. 172, K. 173 & K. 575 "Prussian No. 1"
Naxos 8.550545

Piano Music

Mozart's sonatas for the fortepiano cover a period from 1766 to 1791, with a significant number of mature sonatas written during the years in Vienna. The sonatas inculde much fine music, ranging from the slighter C major Sonata for beginners K. 545 to the superb B flat Sonata, K. 570. In addition to his sonatas he wrote a number of sets of variations, while his ephemeral improvisations in similar form are inevitably lost to us. The published works include operatic variations as well as a set of variations on the theme Ah, vous dirai-je, maman, known in English as Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

Recommended Recordings

Piano Sonatas K. 310, K. 333 & K. 533
Naxos 8.550445

Piano Sonatas K. 311, K. 332, K. 545 & K. 570
Naxos 8.550446

Piano Sonatas K. 279, K. 282, K. 283 & K. 284
Naxos 8.550447

Piano Sonatas K. 281, K. 309, K. 331 & K. 576
Naxos 8.550448

Piano Sonatas K. 280, K. 333, K. 457 & K. 475
Naxos 8.550449

Piano Sonatas K. 457 & K. 351 /Fantaisie K. 475 / Variations K. 265
Naxos 8.550258

Piano Variations K. 24, 25, 54, 179, 180 & 354
Naxos 8.550611

Piano Variations K. 264, 265, 352, 353 & 398
Naxos 8.550612

Piano Variations K. 455, 460, 500, 573 & 613
Naxos 8.550613

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STEREO

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1. **Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 467: Andante** (6:46)
   - Jenő Jandó, Piano / Concentus Hungaricus / András Ligeti (from Naxos 8.550202)
2. **Horn Concerto No. 4 in E Flat Major, K. 495: Romance - Andante cantabile** (4:25)
   - Miloš Števove, French horn / Capella Istropolitana / Josef Kopelman (from Naxos 8.550148)
3. **Adagio in E Major, K. 261** (7:21)
   - Takako Nishizaki, Violin / Capella Istropolitana / Stephen Gunzenhauser (from Naxos 8.550418)
4. **Eine kleine Nachtmusik, K. 525: Romance** (6:07)
   - Capella Istropolitana / Wolfgang Sobotka (from Naxos 8.550026)
5. **Concerto for Flute and Harp in C Major, K. 299: Andantino** (7:35)
   - Jiri Válek, Flute / Hana Müllerová, Harp / Capella Istropolitana / Richard Edlinger (from Naxos 8.550159)
6. **German Dance No. 7, K. 586** (2:28)
   - Capella Istropolitana / Johannes Wildner (from Naxos 8.550412)
7. **Piano Concerto No. 27 in B Flat Major, K. 595: Larghetto** (7:34)
   - Jenő Jandó, Piano / Concentus Hungaricus / András Ligeti (from Naxos 8.550203)
8. **Serenade No. 10 in B Major, K. 361 "Gran Partita": Adagio** (5:59)
   - German Wind Soloists (from Naxos 8.550060)
9. **Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major, K. 216: Adagio** (8:30)
   - Takako Nishizaki, Violin / Capella Istropolitana / Stephen Gunzenhauser (from Naxos 8.550418)
10. **German Dance No. 5, K. 600** (2:28)
    - Capella Istropolitana / Johannes Wildner (from Naxos 8.550412)
11. **Clarinet Concerto in A Major, K. 622: Adagio** (7:21)
    - Ernst Ottensamer, Clarinet / Vienna Mozart Academy / Johannes Wildner (from Naxos 8.550345)
12. **Piano Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466: Romance** (9:07)
    - Jenő Jandó, Piano / Concentus Hungaricus / András Ligeti (from Naxos 8.550201)

(Playing Time: 75:43)

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